

VZCZCXRO8339

OO RUEHAO RUEHCD RUEHGA RUEHGD RUEHHA RUEHHO RUEHMC RUEHMT RUEHNG
RUEHNL RUEHRD RUEHRG RUEHRS RUEHTM RUEHVC
DE RUEHTG #1253/01 3382057
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 042057Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1254
INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE
RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE 0054
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE 0533
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE 1266
RHMFISS/CDR JTF-BRAVO IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL//CINC/POLAD// IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 001253

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/04/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: THE AMBASSADOR AND PRESIDENT-ELECT LOBO DISCUSS
THE CURRENT SITUATION

REF: (A) TEGUCIGALPA 1244 (B) TEGUCIGALPA 1231

TEGUCIGALP 00001253 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1,4 (b & d)

11. (S) Summary: The Ambassador and President-elect Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo met on November 4 to discuss the situation in the wake of the elections and the congressional vote rejecting President Manuel "Mel" Zelaya's restitution. Lobo discussed his support for the full implementation of the Tegucigalpa-San Jose Accord (TSJA) and his plans to promote reconciliation by launching a national dialogue and creating a Truth Commission. The Ambassador and Lobo were in full agreement on the need for regime leader Roberto Micheletti to resign. Lobo said he had discussed this issue directly with Micheletti yesterday, and found him unmoved. He said he remained in touch with Cardinal Rodriguez and Panamanian President Martinelli. He also said he planned to reach out to members of Micheletti's inner circle and that he would not hesitate to confront Micheletti if he continued to resist. Lobo thanked the Ambassador for U.S. efforts to reengage President Arias of Costa Rica. He said Arias was being extremely helpful and confirmed that Arias had invited him to visit San Jose next week (please protect this information). End Summary.

12. (S) The Ambassador and President-elect Lobo met this morning at the Embassy. (Note: The Ambassador took Lobo on a tour of the Embassy facilities and gave the President-elect an opportunity to meet some of our U.S. and FSN staff during the walkthrough. End Note). Lobo told the Ambassador that he believed that his convincing electoral victory had given him a very strong mandate for action and change. He said that the National Party had picked up nearly 20 seats in the Congress for a total of nearly 75 of the 128 member legislature. He added that the Nationalists had won 200 of the 294 mayoral races in the most stunning victory in his party's history. The Ambassador counseled Lobo to run a government that remained close to the common people and encouraged him to adopt "radical" approaches in terms of a commitment to transparency and to fight corruption. Lobo agreed and cited President Uribe's town halls and President

Martinelli's efforts to deal with graft and vested interests as political models for him and his administration. Lobo said he believed all answers need not come from Tegucigalpa and said there was an urgent need to make local and municipal government more accountable to the people.

13. (S) Lobo spoke at length about his support for the full implementation of the TSJA. He cited his recent public statements supporting the Accord and his commitment to national reconciliation and dialogue. He briefed the Ambassador about his meeting yesterday with different sectors of society, such as the political parties, the business community, and civil society organizations, including the Catholic Church and Evangelicals. He said he had invited the labor movement and campesino organizations to attend, but unfortunately many of these remained organized around the pro-Zelaya Resistance Front and had chosen not to participate. Lobo made a point that he needed to be able to bring these groups into the dialogue and said he was reaching out directly to labor and campesino leaders and wanted to meet with them as soon as possible.

14. (S) Both the Ambassador and Lobo agreed that with the Congressional vote of December 2 rejecting Zelaya's restoration, there was no longer a logical reason or need for Micheletti to attempt to stay in power. Lobo said he agreed with the U.S. that Micheletti's resignation would give his new government an opportunity to rebuild ties with the international community. He said he had met with Micheletti yesterday and discussed this issue. The meeting had been friendly and Lobo stressed that he had tried to appeal to Micheletti's best instincts and in a amiable way had made the case why it was best for Micheletti to step down. Lobo told Micheletti of the importance of creating a government of

TEGUCIGALP 00001253 002.2 OF 002

national unity to serve in a transitional role until his inauguration on January 27, 2010. Micheletti appeared in denial and was unwilling to follow Lobo's logic. Micheletti did indicate that he continued to support the creation of a government of national unity as stipulated in the TSJA.

15. (S) Lobo said that he sought to avoid a confrontation with Micheletti in this encounter, and had pushed but did not demand that he step down. He said his priority was to continue to work with key local and international players to convince Micheletti to resign. Lobo said that Martinelli was being helpful and that Cardinal Rodriguez had come to the conclusion that with the Congressional vote going against Zelaya, it was now time for Micheletti to go. He said he was urging the Cardinal to talk to Micheletti as soon as possible. Lobo said he also personally planned to meet with a number of Micheletti insiders, including regime Vice Foreign Minister Marta Lorena Alvarado and Foreign Minister Carlos Lopez Contreras, to seek their assistance. He appreciated U.S. support on this crucial issue. He made clear that if Micheletti refused to resign, he would confront him in private and in public if necessary. The Ambassador told Lobo that time was running out and that the sooner Micheletti left the scene, the sooner his government could begin to repair the damage caused by the coup. The Ambassador reiterated that the U.S. was committed to helping Honduras and its people, and sought to assist the newly elected government be ready to govern in the most effective way. He noted that we did not want winners and losers and wanted to work with all sides. The Ambassador said he hoped the U.S. could soon restore visas to Micheletti and his cohorts. The Ambassador made clear, however, that if Micheletti and his regime attempted to defy the U.S. and international community, they would find no sympathy and noted that he expected Washington to take further tough measures against the regime including more visa revocations. Lobo said he understood the U.S. position and would work closely with us to achieve the common goal.

16. (S) Lobo expressed appreciation for the Ambassador's

efforts with President Arias. He said that he and Arias had spoken on the phone earlier this morning and had discussed the elections and the congressional vote. He said that Arias was keen on helping the new Lobo government reintegrate into the Central American community, which Arias described as "the first concentric circle for Honduras's normalization with the world." He said Arias had invited him to visit San Jose on Tuesday, December 8. Arias had agreed that Lobo could bring all of the other presidential candidates to the visit, which included a working lunch. (Note: The Ambassador spoke to President Arias yesterday and discussed the importance of Arias's leadership in supporting Honduras in the post-election period. Arias is convinced that the world must recognize the results of the November 29 elections, and he is committed to providing the leadership with the regional heads of state to bring Honduras back into the Central American community. End Note.)

17. (C) Comment: Lobo is rapidly moving from the post-election euphoria to facing the real political, social and economic challenges ahead. He understands that moving beyond the June 28 coup requires an effort to reach across the deep political divide to attempt to bring people together. He is equally convinced that Micheletti's presence represents a major obstacle for his new administration and for the well-being of Honduras. Lobo understands that he will have to spearhead the effort, with support from his allies and friends here and abroad, in convincing Micheletti to step down as soon as possible.

LLORENS